



*HANFORD JOINT INFORMATION CENTER
NEWS RELEASE.004
Richland, Washington
June 28, 2000
8:15 p.m.*

DETAILS ON HANFORD FIRE

A brush fire that has burned approximately 40,000 acres on both sides of Highway 240 on the Hanford Site in southeast Washington is being fought with every available resource of federal, state and local authorities. A fire crew of approximately 300 fire fighters and 50 support staff is on scene to protect facilities in and near the 200 West Area, including the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Observatory, the Central Waste Complex, the 222-S laboratory, and the Plutonium Finishing Plant complex.

The fire is approximately 15 miles from the Richland City limits, approximately one mile from the Central Waste Complex, and two miles from the 222-S Laboratories. The Hanford Fire Department has taken mitigative actions to prevent structure fires in the 200 West Area. It has not been determined to be necessary to dig a fire line around individual facilities in the Area.

Approximately 1,700 people work in the 200 West area and they were evacuated earlier in the day. There are about 65 people remaining in 200 West Area in a surveillance capacity. Additionally, an observatory on Rattlesnake Mountain has also been evacuated.

Wind directions have recently shifted on and near the Hanford Site, and are now blowing towards the south and east at speeds of 15-20 miles per hour, with gusts to 30 miles per hour. The new pattern is expected to hold throughout the evening.

The incident is classified as an alert level emergency, which is the lowest of the three DOE emergency categories. An alert level emergency requires activation of Hanford's Emergency Operations Center, which includes communication and consultation with a number of outside agencies.

More information will be made available, as it becomes known. Media inquiries should be directed to the Hanford Joint Information Center at (509) 376-3322; the phone number for Public inquiries is (509) 376-8116. Also, Emergency broadcast information can be heard on KONA Radio on 610 AM and 105.3 FM.

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For questions or comments about this page, please send email to [Theodore E Erik Olds@rl.gov](mailto:Theodore_E_Erik_Olds@rl.gov)

